

## CLAIMS

1. A method for carrying out a bartering system over a network, comprising:

5 receiving a needs list having at least one needed item a user desires to acquire;

receiving a priority indication for at least one of i) each of the at least one needed item, and ii) each group of at least one item;

10 constructing the needs list with the priority indication into a barter protocol language; and

searching available items for a match with each of the at least one needed item based upon the priority indication wherein higher priority indicated needed items are attempted  
15 to be matched before lower priority indicated needed items.

2. The method of claim 1 further comprising receiving an availability list having at least one available item the user desires to trade for the at least one needed item.

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3. The method of claim 1 wherein searching available items is performed first within a same bartering system and performed second across a different bartering system if no match is found during the search within the same bartering  
25 system.

4. The method of claim 3 further comprising translating, before the searching is performed across the different bartering system, the needed items to at least one

of i) a common barter protocol language, and ii) a different barter protocol language of the different bartering system.

5        5.    The method of claim 1 wherein the needs list  
further comprises a range of near equivalent items with each  
near equivalent item having an associated priority  
indication indicating a user's desire to accept a given near  
equivalent item in lieu of a given needed item if a match  
for the given needed item is not found.

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6.    The method of claim 1 wherein the match is a  
direct match having a one to one correspondence.

15       7.    The method of claim 1 wherein the match is a  
chained association involving the needs list and  
availability lists of a plurality of users.

20       8.    The method of claim 1 wherein the priority  
indication for a given needed item is indicated by a  
monetary value that a user is willing to provide for the  
needed item to carry out a bartering transaction.

25       9.    The method of claim 2 further comprising receiving  
a second priority indication for a given available item  
indicating a user's desire to use the given available item  
to carry out a bartering transaction.

30       10.   The method of claim 9 wherein the second priority  
indication is indicated by a monetary value that the user is  
willing to accept for the given available item.

11. The method of claim 1 further comprising receiving a monetary value associated with each of the at least one needed item.

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12. The method of claim 11 further comprising receiving a monetary value priority indication, associated with the received monetary value, wherein the monetary value priority indication indicates a user's willingness to vary a  
10 payment value for a given needed item from the monetary value.

13. The method of claim 2 further comprising receiving a monetary value associated with each of the at least one  
15 available item.

14. The method of claim 13 further comprising receiving a monetary value priority indication, associated with the received monetary value, wherein the monetary value  
20 priority indication indicates a user's willingness to vary a received value for a given available item from the monetary value.

15. The method of claim 11 wherein the monetary value  
25 is received from data provided by a rating agency.

16. The method of claim 13 wherein the monetary value is received from data provided by a rating agency.

17. The method of claim 1 wherein the barter protocol language is in XML.

18. The method of claim 1 wherein each of the at least  
5 one needed item can be at least one of a physical item and a nonphysical item.

19. The method of claim 18 wherein each physical item and each nonphysical item has a corresponding representation  
10 mechanism within the barter protocol language.

20. The method of claim 18 wherein the nonphysical item represents a needed service.

21. The method of claim 2 wherein each of the at least  
15 one available item can be at least one of a physical item and a nonphysical item.

22. The method of claim 21 wherein the nonphysical  
20 item represents an available service.

23. The method of claim 2 further comprising  
indicating equivalency of at least one available item with  
at least one needed item.

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24. The method of claim 2 further comprising finding a match for at least one given available item in consideration for a found match for at least one given needed item, wherein the at least one available item, and the at least  
30 one needed item are represented in terms of equivalency.

25. A barter protocol language comprising:

means for specifying a needs list of needed items for  
5 each one of a plurality of users;

means for specifying an availability list of available  
items for each one of the plurality of users;

10 means for specifying a priority indication for at least  
one of i) each needed item, and ii) each group of at least  
one item, indicating a corresponding user's priority for  
acquiring the needed item; and

15 means for specifying a range of near equivalent items,  
each near equivalent item having an associated priority  
indication indicating a user's desire to accept a given near  
equivalent item in lieu of a given needed item if a match  
for the given needed item cannot be found.

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26. The barter protocol language of claim 25 wherein  
the means for specifying the availability list of available  
items further comprises means for indicating at least one  
available item for being utilized in acquiring at least one  
25 needed item.

27. The barter protocol language of claim 25 wherein  
the language is one of a markup language.

28. The barter protocol language of claim 27 wherein the mark up language is XML.

29. The barter protocol language of claim 25 wherein  
5 each needed item and each available item has a corresponding representation mechanism.

30. The barter protocol language of claim 25 wherein the needed items and available items can be physical items  
10 and nonphysical items.

31. The barter protocol language of claim 25 wherein the nonphysical items are representative of services.

32. A computer system having means for carrying out  
15 bartering over a network, comprising:

means for receiving a needs list having at least one  
needed item a user desires to acquire;

means for receiving a priority indication for at least  
20 one of i) each of the at least one needed item, and ii) each group of at least one needed item;

means for constructing the needs list with the priority  
indication into a barter protocol language; and

means for searching available items for a match with  
25 each of the at least one needed item based upon the priority indication wherein higher priority indicated needed items are attempted to be matched before lower priority indicated needed items.

33. The computer system of claim 32 further comprising means for receiving an availability list having at least one available item the user desires to trade for the at least one needed item.

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34. The computer system of claim 32 wherein the means for searching available items is performed first within a same bartering system and performed second across a different bartering system if no match is found during the  
10 search within the same bartering system.

35. The computer system of claim 34 further comprising means for translating the needed items to at least one of i) a common barter protocol language, and ii) a different  
15 protocol language of the different bartering system before the searching is performed across the different bartering system.

36. The computer system of claim 32 wherein the needs  
20 list further comprises a range of near equivalent items with each near equivalent item having an associated priority indication indicating a user's desire to accept a given near equivalent item in lieu of a given needed item if a match for the given needed item is not found.

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37. The computer system of claim 32 wherein the match is a direct match having a one to one correspondence.

38. The computer system of claim 32 wherein the match is a chained association involving the needs list and availability lists of a plurality of users.

5 39. The computer system of claim 33 further comprising means for enabling an indication of equivalency of at least one available item with at least one needed item.

10 40. The computer system of claim 33 wherein the means for searching further comprises means for finding a match for at least one given available item in consideration for a found match for at least one given needed item, wherein the at least one available item, and the at least one needed item are represented in terms of equivalency.

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41. The computer system of claim 40 wherein the at least one given needed item and the at least one given available item are dissimilar items.

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